

Connections

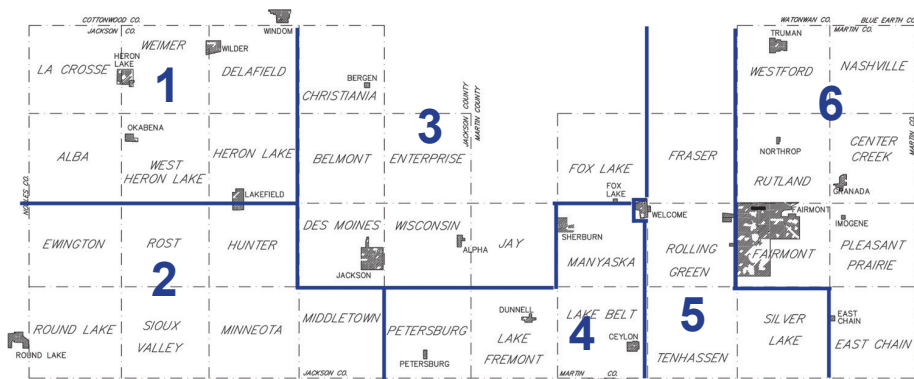
February 2024

For the member-owners of Federated Rural Electric



Volume 28, Issue 2

\$700 Operation Round Up scholarship form inserted in the January bills; high school seniors apply by April 1



The map shows the districts where the six scholarships will be awarded, plus three more chances to win under District At-Large, which includes Districts 1-6.



High school seniors: the Operation Round Up Scholarship application is now available. \$6,300 total will be awarded this spring as nine scholarships.

The application came with the January electric bill. Otherwise, find the application on Federated's website (www.federatedrea.coop), call or e-mail info@federatedrea.coop.

Plus, stop by your school counselor's office for it. The student must be the son or daughter of a current Federated electric account member.

Federated's Trust Board approved awarding one \$700 scholarship for each of the six Federated districts and then three more from the remaining applications combined for additional chances to win one (a total of nine scholarships). The applications are due back at Federated's office by April 1, 2024. All nine recipients will be notified by May 1 with their photos published in the June *Connections* newsletter.

Students will receive the scholarship check after completion of the first semester of higher education with a 2.0 GPA or higher and submit proof of registration for the next semester. The scholarship check will be jointly issued to the school and student.

Enter today!

Nominating Committee met February 9; they seek co-op candidates

Federated's Nominating Committee seeks candidates to run for the Board of Directors and Nominating Committee. Members vote on these candidates at the Annual Meeting August 1 or by mail the month before. The Nominating Committee had its first meeting February 9; the candidates' names will be presented at their April meeting.

If you would like to suggest a member for consideration, call Federated at 847-3520 or 1-800-321-3520 and press extension zero for assistance. Otherwise, e-mail info@federatedrea.coop. These are all four-year terms. Refer to the district map on the left.

Board of Director Candidates

- Two nominees from District Three
- Two nominees from District Four

Nominator Candidates

- Two nominees from District One
- Two nominees from District Two

Trust Board Director Candidates

- One nominee from District Three
- One nominee from District Four

Trust Board nominations are approved by the electric Board.

These nominations will be posted at Federated 30 days before the Annual Meeting. The nominations can also be made by petition at least 20 days prior to the meeting. The candidates will be listed in the June *Connections* newsletter, while their biographies will be posted in the July edition.

At A Glance



Giver her a hot & steamy Valentine's present from co-op

A new water heater may not be the most romantic gift... Yet, it sure provides a hot, steamy and relaxing bath or shower after a long, stressful day! Upgrade your water heater that's more than 20 years old before it turns into a leaking geyser! Price \$589, plus tax. Installation included.

This publication focuses on cooperative savings, programs and events. As this is the official member publication, member's story ideas, letters-to-the-editor and comments are welcomed.

Andrea Christoffer, CCC, Editor
"Owned by those it serves"

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Energy Wise

Plant the seeds this winter for energy efficiency for your farm's energy use

While most people think of spring as the season that farmers plant their crops, farmers can actually start planting energy-efficiency measures now in the midst of winter.

Reap the rebates offered by your local electric cooperative for your ag operation or business. Let us highlight a few. Visit the cooperative's website for more details so you can raise your energy-efficiency yields. Contact the co-op's energy expert on any of these rebates.

Hog farrowing mats

Building a new hog barn or wanting to replace heat lamps in an existing barn? Go with heated electric mats with automated climate controls. These mats significantly reduce heat lost to the surrounding air by providing heat directly to the piglets. The rebate is \$45/crate for an existing barn's heat lamp retrofit and \$30/crate for a new construction barn.

Livestock waterer

Upgrade to an insulated or energy-free livestock waterer that replaces a standard electric waterer. The rebate is \$75 for each waterer.

Agricultural ventilation

Three types of agricultural fans are eligible for co-op rebates. Exhaust fans are eligible for \$15 each. Circulation fans qualify for \$25 each. Meanwhile, high-volume, low-speed (HVLS) fans receive \$400 each.

Dairy and livestock farms use fans to control air quality and comfort, while



Pamper your piglets with an upgrade to heated electric mats with automated controls. Shut off the energy-intensive heat lamps! — Photo courtesy Stanfield Farrowing

eliminating airborne contaminants and disease. Automated ventilation controls optimize fan speeds and run time, based on weather conditions, to reduce operating costs.

LED lighting

Retrofit the lighting in businesses, farm shops, dairy or hog barns (sorry, not available for new construction). Reduce your operating costs and maintenance, plus increase livestock production. The lighting form details what rebate amount is available for each type of retrofit lighting.

Motor & drive rebates

Most motors turn at nearly a constant speed. They are designed to operate at their horsepower (HP) rating. Yet,


sometimes the work motors need to perform is less than the maximum design speed. Save energy by using the power you need from a motor. Speed reduction is achieved by variable-frequency drive (VFD) or variable-speed drive (VSD). Rebates are not available for replacement VFD/VSDs, soft starts, power factor correction or harmonic correction applications.

These rebates are for new drives. It must be tied to an automated control system and have a true power factor of .90 or greater used for HVAC fans, pumps, cooling towers, process equipment or industrial fans. VFDs/VSDs are rebated at \$30/horsepower.

Replace inefficient shaded pole or permanent split capacitor motors with fractional horsepower motors; fractional horsepower motors use less energy running 75 percent more efficiently. For fractional horsepower rebates new or retrofit motors qualify:

- 1/64 to 1/16 HP (11-48 watt) motors rebated \$5/motor;
- 1/15 to 1/6 HP rebated \$10/motor;
- 1/5 to 3/4 HP rebated \$15/motor.

These rebates are for new drives and must be tied to an automated control system. It must have a true power factor of .90 or greater and be used for HVAC fans, pumps, cooling towers, process equipment or industrial fans.

Rebates may be available for robotic systems and electric forklifts too. 

Electric snow shovel makes winter easier!


You may have a snowblower for your farm or business, but for the small areas, you manually shovel and then may need a chiropractor visit or two to recover.

Invest instead in an electric shovel from EGO Power to work smarter. Buy the multi-head system for \$399; receive the power head, battery charger and snow shovel attachment. If you already have the EGO multi-head for use with a string trimmer, hedge trimmer, cultivator or several other attachments, buy just the power-head attachment for only \$189.

The snow shovel throws snow up to 6 inches deep 25 feet. It is 12 inches wide so it works great for sidewalks, decks and smaller driveways that your tractor snow blower cannot reach. The overload protection system can

temporarily disengage the auger rotation under extreme loads or jams to prevent damage to the motor. The unit runs quietly with long run times due to the high-efficiency motor with variable speed trigger and two-speed selector. It weighs 28 pounds and uses a 56-volt, 4 amp-hour lithium battery. According to EGO, this snow shovel can clean a four-car driveway on one battery. The tool possesses a five-year warranty, while the battery features a three-year warranty.

You can purchase this electric-powered snow shovel at your local Ace Hardware store or online from Lowes or Amazon.

If you own other brand's battery-powered yard tools, check with that brand as they may also have a small "snow-shovel" attachment to energize digging out from a snowstorm. 



Manager Matt Dauer at the Sleepy Eye Ace Hardware demonstrates the EGO snow shovel to energize your snow removal.

Safety

Five ways to safeguard your home this winter

Winter is always a good time to create a warm and cozy haven at home. Unfortunately, as we see increased use of heating equipment, candles and electrical items, home fires tend to increase during the winter months.

Follow these five ways to safeguard your home this winter.

1. Ensure carbon monoxide and smoke detectors are working properly. If your detectors are battery-operated, replace the batteries annually. Test the detectors once a month and give them a good dusting to ensure the sensors are clear of dirt and debris.

2. Inspect electrical cords. We depend on more cords during the winter. Before using any corded items, double check to make sure cords aren't frayed or cracked.

If you use portable space heaters, remember to keep them at least 3 feet away from flammable items. Use models that include an auto shut-off feature and overheat protection. Space heaters can take a toll on your energy bills. Use them efficiently (to heat smaller spaces) and safely. Never plug a space heater into a power strip.




Test your carbon monoxide and smoke detector to keep you safe year-round.

3. Avoid overloading electrical outlets and power strips. When overloaded with electrical items, outlets and power strips can overheat and catch fire. If you use power strips for multiple devices, make sure the strip can handle the electrical load. For a safer bet look for power strips that include surge protection.

4. Clean the fireplace to improve safety and efficiency. A warm fire on a chilly night is divine, but keep it safe. As wood burns, a sticky substance known as creosote builds up in the chimney. When creosote buildup

becomes too thick, a chimney fire can ignite. The chimney should be cleaned at least once a year to reduce fire risks. Regular cleaning also improves air flow and limits the amount of carbon monoxide that seeps indoors.

5. Practice safety in the kitchen. As we spend more time in the kitchen during frigid days, be mindful of potential fire hazards. Never leave food that's cooking on the stovetop unattended. Clean and remove spilled foods from cooking surfaces and be mindful of where you place flammable items, like dish towels. 

Federated Focus



Iowa complaint process posted

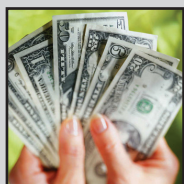
If you have a concern or complaint regarding Federated Rural Electric, it should be addressed to: Scott Reimer, general manager, Federated Rural Electric, PO Box 69, Jackson MN 56143-0069 or call 507-847-3520.

If Federated does not resolve your complaint, you may request assistance from: Utilities Board, Department of Commerce, 350 Maple St., Des Moines IA 50319-0069 or call 515-281-5979.

If your complaint is related to service, rather than rates, and Federated does not resolve your complaint, you may request assistance from the Utilities Division.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

2024 residential rebate offered



Go to Federated's website for the 2024 rebate forms (federatedrea.coop) or call the

office to request one be mailed.

- \$75 for Energy Star refrigerator or freezer with proof of recycling the old unit.

- \$25 Energy Star dehumidifier or Smart Wi-Fi thermostat

- \$400/ton for a ground source heat pump

- \$500 for a ductless air source heat pump

- \$1,000 for a SEER2 14.3-15.2 air source heat pump (formerly 15-16 SEER)

- \$1,500 for a SEER2 16.2 or higher air source heat pump (formerly 17 SEER or higher)

A copy of the sales receipt must be submitted with all rebates. ☎



Scott Reimer

Manager's Message

2024 brings new year and new work plan projects

Welcome to 2024 and the January thaw we are experiencing. We hope this newsletter finds you in good health and high spirits. As we embark on a new year, we are thrilled to share some significant developments regarding our budget and workplans, specifically focusing on the electrifying progress in the electric and broadband sectors.

In the recently passed budget we have allocated resources strategically to enhance the efficiency and reliability of our electric and broadband services. The funds will be channeled into upgrading infrastructure, adopting advanced technologies and implementing smart-grid solutions. These initiatives aim to optimize power distribution, reduce downtime and ensure that our members receive top-notch service.

Speaking of strategy, our Board of Directors and management personnel will embark on another strategic-planning session in late February. With all the industry changes taking place we feel there is a need more so than in the past. This will be the third strategic-planning session in my time with Federated and it always creates thought-provoking goal sessions for all of us involved. This will set the course for the next three-five years and make sure that we remain on track with your best interests in mind.

A portion of the budget has been earmarked for renewable energy projects, namely our 2.1 MW wind turbine near Welcome; it will receive a few needed upgrades this year, while reinforcing our cautiously optimistic dedication to a cleaner and greener future. We believe in the importance of embracing innovative solutions that not only benefit our members, but also contribute to a more sustainable future for generations to come. With the new Minnesota mandate of 100 percent carbon free by 2040, it puts us all in the creativity and think "outside the box" mindset. Although our power suppliers will bear the brunt of the effort, we feel the need to do what we can where we can.

Broadband's 2024 work plan & grant

We understand the crucial role that broadband plays in today's interconnected world. To bridge the digital divide and empower our communities we have outlined extensive workplans for broadband expansion. The goal is to bring high-speed internet access to unserved and underserved areas, plus ensure that all members have equal opportunities in the digital landscape.

One of the highlights of our broadband initiatives is the Border-to-Border Grant in Jackson County. We are pleased to announce our partnership with TD&I Cable Maintenance, a reputable contractor based in Hudson, WI. This collaboration aims to accelerate the deployment of broadband infrastructure, providing residents in Jackson County with faster and more reliable internet connectivity.

TD&I Cable Maintenance has a proven track record in delivering high-quality cable and internet services throughout the Midwest. With their expertise we are confident that the Border-to-Border Grant project will be executed seamlessly, bringing enhanced connectivity to the members in Jackson County this spring after crops are planted. We appreciate their commitment to Federated and look forward to a successful partnership.

As we move forward, we will continue to keep you informed about the progress of these and other initiatives that come to the forefront. Transparency and open communication are integral to our cooperative's values. We want you to be part of this exciting journey toward a more electrified and connected future.

Thank you for your continued support and trust in Federated. Together, we are powering progress. ☎

Power plant bus tour returns! Join us June 12-14

Join us on a three-day trek across the Dakota Plains to tour the Antelope Valley power plant and the Coteau lignite mine June 12-14. In addition, tour the Garrison Dam.

Depart from Jackson June 12 on the air-conditioned charter bus. Plenty of movies, games and frequent rest stops break up the day.

The big tour day is June 13. Depart Bismarck, North Dakota, for the Garrison Dam, power plant and mine. Take the elevator to the top of the power plant to see the view, peek into the coal-burning furnace and enjoy the bus ride into the lignite open pit mine, weather permitting. In the evening enjoy a relaxing supper and riverboat ride on the Missouri River.

On June 14 the group heads back home. Enjoy periodic rest stops and return to Jackson in the early evening.

As a cooperative member-owner, learn about these sources of your electricity. The cost is only \$138 per Federated member or \$275 per Federated couple. The fee includes the cost for the hotel, bus, all meals, riverboat and snack breaks.

Federated shares the tour bus with two Iowa co-ops so just 15 seats are available. Sign up today! Call with your credit card to reserve your seats or send in your contact info with your check payment and the coupon. Call Federated (847-3520 or 800-321-3520, press extension 2224 for Andrea). If you have gone before, please do not sign up again so other members may learn more about their power supply. ☺



Tour lignite coal mine & coal-fired power plant

June 12-14, 2024

Basin Tour Registration

1 Federated member for \$138

2 Federated members for \$275

Name(s) _____

Phone # _____ Amount Paid \$ _____

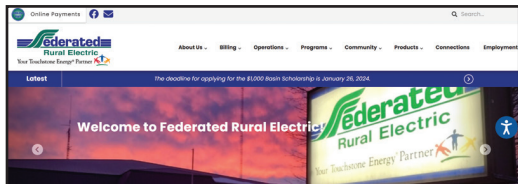
Address _____

City/state/zip _____

Mail to: Federated Rural Electric, ATTN: Andrea, PO Box 69, Jackson MN 56143-0069 with the check or call 847-3520 or 1-800-321-3520 extension 2224 for Andrea and pay with credit card.



Website refreshed! Go surfing!



A new year brings a new look for Federated's website (www.federatedrea.coop).

"It was time to refresh the look of our website," said Andrea Christoffer, Federated's marketing and communications manager. "The content remains unchanged so members can still have access to the cooperative information in the same places. We wanted to point out the new look so members know it's still the co-op's website."

The website upgrade was completed in January. Members will find these three main changes:

1. A full suite of accessibility features, including vision impaired and seizure safe.
 2. Updated, modern design.
 3. Performance improvements for mobile phones and tablets.
- Let us point out some of the content on the co-op's website.
1. Pay your bill using the "Online Pay" green button.
 2. View the public outage map for a storm outage to know the extent.
 3. Find forms for rebates, Operation Round Up, scholarship applications, Auto Pay, etc...

If you encounter an issue or want to make a suggestion on the website, e-mail: info@federatedrea.coop. ☺

Congratulations on your years of service to the cooperative!

Congratulations to these valued Federated employees and director for their years of service milestones reached in 2023!

- Kathy Johnson, staff accountant, five years.

- Bruce Brockmann, District 6 director, 10 years.

- George Madden, operations manager, 20 years.

This 35 years of service was recognized at a recent employee meeting.

We appreciate your hard work and dedication to the cooperative's member-owners.

We tip the hard hat to you, for all that you do! ☺



Kathy Johnson
5 years



Bruce Brockmann
10 years



George Madden
20 years

What can we expect from the Minnesota legislature in 2024?



— By Jenny Glumack, director of government affairs, Minnesota Rural Electric Association (MREA)

The 2024 legislative session starts February 12. With a two-year budget enacted last session, no bills need to be passed this year to keep the state government operating. However, there is a projected budget surplus of

\$2.4 billion, which will be used by Governor Tim Walz and the legislature to develop a supplemental budget for the 2024 legislative session. Minnesota Management and Budget will release an updated budget forecast in late February, so then the governor and the legislature will adjust their budget proposals to match the updated amount.

With a smaller surplus than last year and the agencies buried under implementing the extensive new programs and spending passed last session, we expect the focus of this session to be on a large funding package for public infrastructure needs across the state. Both legislative leadership and the governor have emphasized working on a capital investment bill as their main priority this session.

Other contributing factors to consider this session are the beginning of a \$730 million renovation and expansion of the State Office Building which holds offices for all House members and staff. House members need to be out of their offices once session concludes in May for the project to proceed on schedule. It is also an election year, which means legislators running for reelection will be especially attuned to campaign politics.

With the “Carbon Free by 2040” bill passed last session, the energy committees will be focused on proposals to better align the permitting process with the demands of the clean-energy transition mandated by the legislature. A stakeholder group was convened over interim that resulted in a report offering 35 total recommendations for making the permitting process more efficient.

We also expect the moratorium on building new nuclear facilities in Minnesota to be a discussion item. As utilities work out how to comply with the 2040 carbon free mandate, all clean-energy generation sources should be on the table, including nuclear. We take the stand that we need all available tools in our toolbox when working to provide reliable power to Minnesotans.

MREA is also working with the Department of Revenue and legislators to clarify how electric cooperative property taxes are assessed that will result in savings for members.

More broadly, we will be focused on preventing any new mandates from being imposed. While some legislators would like to enact more prescriptive requirements for how utilities decarbonize the electrical grid, we firmly believe they need to let the experts at utilities decide how we will reach 2040 carbon free compliance. ☺

Tree trimming is a factor for reliable electric service from your electric co-op



Have an area where you think the trees are getting too close to the power lines? Let the co-op know so they can take a look and see if any trimming is needed.

Tree branches contacting power lines can cause blinks, outages and downed wires. Your electric cooperative uses Carr’s Tree Service to trim the problem trees in the co-op’s service area.

Throughout the year line crews and members can notify the electric cooperative of trees that could cause future problems. Carr’s then trims or removes trees when in the area.

This regular maintenance helps. A dead or dying tree could pull down power lines when it falls. Even healthy trees near power can go down in powerful storms causing blinks or outages. Plus, trees growing into power lines can be hazards to children climbing trees.

If you notice trees that could potentially cause problems with power lines, contact the Operations Department at your cooperative. Plus, if you need to cut a tree that is close to the overhead lines, call the co-op first.

Brown County REA’s tree trimming schedule

BCREA 2024 tree trimming schedule: January, February, March, July, August and possibly December, depending on the budget at year-end.

Federated’s tree trimming schedule

Federated hires Carr’s Tree Service for year-round tree trimming. They occasionally leave the co-op’s area to work utilities hit by storms.

Carr’s tree trimmers have marked trucks. If you are unsure of their identity, contact your electric co-op. Sometimes, tree-trimming scammers operate in the state. ☹

Ooey, gooey, chewy caramel recipes are calling! Share yours today

Well, well, well...do tell! What's your favorite caramel recipe? Share your caramel recipes for bars, brownies, ice cream topping, apple dip and the homemade candy. Send your favorite caramel recipes to Editor, Federated Rural Electric, PO Box 69, Jackson MN 56143-0069 or e-mail to christoffer@federatedrea.coop by February 27. Add your name and phone number. Thanks for sharing with us! ☺

Stuffing Casserole by Barbara Sellner, Sleepy Eye

- | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| 4 c. cooked chicken | 1 large onion, chopped |
| 13 quarts dry bread crumbs | 5 stalks celery, chopped |
| 5 c. chicken broth | 1 tsp. sage |
| 8 eggs | 1/8 tsp. cloves |
| 1/2 c. butter | 1 tsp. poultry seasoning |
| 1 can cream of chicken soup | 1 1/2 tsp. salt |

Warm the broth and add to bread crumbs. Melt the butter and add to the bread mixture. Add the remaining ingredients and mix well. Place in a roasting pan. Cook in a slow oven at 300° for two to three hours. Stir occasionally. ☺



Help us by sharing your recipes in 2024 *Connections* newsletters. Submit recipes now for use later in the year. Use the e-mail or mailing address listed above.

- March — caramel
 - April — grilling recipes
 - May — onions
 - June — cheese
 - July — ribs
 - August — salsa
 - September — sliders
 - October — pumpkin
 - November — lettuce/salads
 - December — cinnamon
- Thanks for sharing! ☺

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against leaks

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1-800-252-1166



Call Gopher State One Call before doing any digging more than 12" deep — 48 hours before digging for foundations, trees and tiling. Register at www.gopherstate-onecall.org or call 811. Call a licensed electrician to locate the underground lines on your side of the meter. ☺

Feel the love

with Federated Broadband

every time you use the internet!



You'll LOVE everything that you can do with Federated Broadband: surfing, streaming, working, schooling, shopping and staying connected with family and friends. Sign up with Federated Broadband for local internet service, great pricing and it comes with your electric bill too. This February Federated Broadband offers a special deal for new customers. Sign up in February and receive a FREE install (\$150 value)! Don't miss this opportunity to save money and enjoy the best internet service in rural areas. Streaming TV packages available too so you can drop the dish! Switch now for a smoother, easier transition when Broadband's fiber service reaches your area.



info@federatedbroadband.coop • www.federatedbroadband.coop

507-847-1001 or 1-833-847-8001



Rural Electric

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Bruce Brockmann — 399-3487

Glenn Dicks — 840-1075

Jon Saxen — 236-7027

Scott Thiesse — 399-6427

The Board of Directors generally meets the last business day of the month at 8 a.m. at the Jackson office. Regular board meetings are open to the membership. Members interested in discussing business items should contact the general manager or president three days before the meeting.

Federated Broadband's Residential packages:

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